



Voting Information News

May 2005 ☞ Vol. 15, No. 5

A roundup of voting news from the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) for voters, potential voters and those who assist voters.

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Voting Assistance Officers

“To Do” This Month:

☑ Announce the 2005 elections taking place in New Jersey and Virginia to electors in your unit/organization whose voting residence is NJ or VA (see page 3).

☑ Encourage participation in the 2005 Voting Slogan Contest. The Slogan Contest is a good way to involve people and promote voter awareness. Remember, participants may enter as many slogans in the contest as they wish. Contest ends July 10, 2005.

☑ Place a copy of this issue in your voting continuity folder (VCF). Consider making an electronic VCF.

☑ Check the FVAP web site (www.fvap.gov and select “Voting Assistance Information”) for online training materials for new VAOs.

Best Practice: Voting Continuity Folder--- Electronically!

What is a Voting Continuity Folder?

Often members of the Uniformed Services and employees of Federal agencies, Embassies/Consulates, and international organizations and corporations, move in and out of Voting Assistance Officer (VAO) assignments in the normal course of their job rotations. Many times new VAOs taking on the voting program for the first time enter their VAO job with little understanding of what they are required to do. For this reason, the FVAP stresses the importance of creating and maintaining a voting continuity folder that can be given to your successor.

Your continuity files can be in the form of a physical notebook or file folders. You can also replicate a recent best practice and develop, share, and maintain your continuity folder electronically (see last section of this article).

What Does the Voting Continuity Folder Contain?

The continuity folder should provide basic details on absentee voting procedures; contain key election materials, websites or anything that may help your successor perform successfully. The continuity file should also provide the VAO with a quick orientation of his or her voting responsibilities within an organization and Service. It should indicate the duties that will meet the organization's absentee voting needs.

The following lists some of the voting-related materials FVAP suggests you to keep in your voting continuity files:

- ☐ Absentee voting forms: the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA SF-76), the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB SF-186) and copies of the online FPCA and FWAB.
- ☐ *Current Voting Assistance Guide.*
- ☐ *Voting Information News (VIN)* and *Voting News Releases.*

- ☐ VAO Designation Letter.
- ☐ Election Dates Calendar.
- ☐ Service or Organization Reporting Requirement Materials.
- ☐ Current State Department or Service guidance (directive, instruction, order, etc.) and Voting Action Plan (as applicable).
- ☐ DoD Directives such as 1000.4. (Federal Voting Assistance Program) and 1344.10 (Political Activities by Members of the Armed Forces in Active Duty). Copy of the Hatch Act, Title 5 U.S.C. Sec. 7321 (for Federal Employees overseas).
- ☐ Voting Assistance election website links.
- ☐ VAO local phone and email contact list. Include contact information for VAOs in other units, services, organizations and installations near you for future voting assistance activities.
- ☐ VAOs stateside: Local county election official contact information to refer local military members for assistance.
- ☐ Training materials from workshops.
- ☐ Voting assistance best practices, lessons learned and novel ideas.
- ☐ Email messages from Service Voting Action Officer (SVAO), installation VAO (IVAO) or FVAP.
- ☐ FVAP contact information such as, phone numbers and email addresses.
- ☐ Information and motivational handouts and brochures, such as the How to Do It! Vote Absentee brochure.
- ☐ Miscellaneous emails addressing problem solving and other issues of concern.

Many of these materials are available through your normal service supply chain, the IVAO, SVAO or FVAP. You may also download voting assistance materials from the FVAP web site at www.fvap.gov.
(continued on last page)

Changes to the Use of the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot

With the passage of the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005 (NDAA FY05)* in October 2004, the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) **may now be used by all absent Uniformed Service voters both inside and outside the Continental United States** as well as U.S. citizens residing overseas. Prior to *NDAA FY05* only Uniformed Service members and U.S. citizens residing overseas were eligible to use the FWAB. The FWAB is a back up or emergency ballot used for general election and is available online (OFWAB). It is used in the event that the citizen does not receive their requested regular state absentee ballot in time for it to be voted and returned to the local election official to be counted.

The second change brought about by this *Act* regards the application deadline. The FWAB is voted if the citizen has not received the requested regular absentee ballot from their state after having applied for it early enough so that **the application was received at least 30 days before the general election or, before the deadline established by the state, whichever is later.** Prior to *NDAA FY05* the application must have been received at least 30 days before the election.

It is still important for voters to apply for their absentee ballot as early as possible. FVAP suggests applying in January each year to ensure that all ballots for all elections held that year will be received. Additionally, unless the state has expanded the use of the FWAB (see next article), these ballots can only be used in general elections when someone has met all regular voting requirements and not received their absentee ballot.

Voting Assistance Officers and state election officials must be aware of these two changes for future general elections for Federal offices. These provisions apply to all the states, the District of Columbia, and the four U.S. territories covered by *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)*. Refer to the 2004 *News Release* titled "Rules Regarding Submission Of The Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot" on the FVAP web site <http://www.fvap.gov> or call FVAP at 1-800-438-8683, DSN 425-1584 or 703-588-1584 for further clarification. ☑



Ways That States Have Expanded Use of the FWAB

One of FVAP's legislative initiative best practices (see March 2005 issue of this newsletter) for state governments to adopt is "expanded use of the FWAB." What exactly does that mean?

(1) It means allowing *UOCAVA* voters to **use the FWAB in special, primary, and run-off elections when they do not receive their ballot in addition to general elections currently authorized by Federal law.** FVAP prepositions the FWAB throughout the world at military bases, embassies and consulates, election organizations, and corporations. The FWAB is also available on-line at www.fvap.gov. This legislation would help enfranchise citizens experiencing ballot transit difficulties, such as slow or absent mail delivery in certain parts of the world. Even with local election officials mailing ballots on time, there is no assurance that the ballot will be received by the citizen, voted and returned by the state deadline. By authorizing the use of the FWAB for all elections, states can be very proactive in addressing the mail challenges experienced by *UOCAVA* citizens. Since it is a stated mission of FVAP to foster voter participation, FVAP encourages the adoption of this measure.

States that have expanded the use of the FWAB for other than the general elections are: Colorado, Nebraska (legislated in 2004), Connecticut (all elections for Federal offices), Iowa, Maryland, Montana, Oklahoma (all elections for Federal offices), Rhode Island, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.

(2) Expanding the FWAB can also mean **accepting the FWAB as a simultaneous registration form and voted ballot.** Most information on the FWAB is the same as the information requested on the FPCA and thus, should be adequate for voter registration. For those in combat zones or remote locations where time is of the essence, this can be very helpful to enable someone to get registered and vote.

States that have expanded the use of the FWAB as a registration form are: Nebraska (legislated in 2004), Iowa, Maryland, and Montana.

To learn more about the states that have adopted this legislative best practice and how it is implemented visit the FVAP website at www.fvap.gov for State By State Instructions, or contact the FVAP (information on last page). ☑

Elections in 2005

Even though this is not a Federal election year, voting assistance does not stop (See "Don't Stop Now" article in the December 2004 issue of this newsletter). In 2005, voting activity will primarily take place for offices at the state and local level. As states allow citizens covered by the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act* to vote in these elections, voting assistance will be required. Please ensure that citizens have applied for their absentee ballots using the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) or any other acceptable means authorized by the state, e.g., letter, email, by the state application deadline.

Each state has different guidelines, requirements and deadlines for registering and requesting an absentee ballot. Visit the FVAP website (www.fvap.gov) for State By State Instructions when completing the FPCA and include an email address on the application.

Among the many upcoming elections, there are two important races for Governor in 2005. These races are in New Jersey and Virginia. Please watch for news releases to be published on these elections. Election dates are listed below.

New Jersey:

Primary Election: June 7, 2005

General Election: November 8, 2005

The New Jersey elections web site is <http://www.state.nj.us/lps/elections/electionshome.html>.

Virginia:

Primary: June 14, 2005

General Election: November 8, 2005

Visit the Virginia elections web site at <http://www.sbe.state.va.us>. ☒

U.S. Embassies and Consulates Voting Assistance Best Practices

American Embassy and Consulate Voting Assistance Officers and staff members around the world have contributed significantly to fostering voter participation in the 2004 general election. Their success is attributed to hard work and implementing best practices, novel ideas and lessons learned into their voting assistance program.

Following is a partial list of voting activities submitted from around the globe in 2004. FVAP encourages VAOs to replicate these practices in their voting plan this year. The list will be continued in future issues of this newsletter.

- Post created a Voting folder (paper and/or electronic version) to ensure continuity.
- Post learned from previous years experience and reports of other VAOs and started planning early to ensure that the highest number of potential voters are reached and motivated.
- Prepared a paper voting packet and an electronic version for dissemination of voting information. The packet consists of a "How to Do It! Vote absentee" brochure (FAQs), the election calendar, registration application and ballot request, instructions on how to complete the registration, information about electronic transmission and about the FVAP website.
- Provided voting information to US citizens who visit the American Citizen Services Unit for registrations, social security benefits, tax information, passports, notariats and other services.
- The voting plan has been brought to the attention of the Ambassador and other embassy officers at the country team meeting and the Junior Officers meeting. ☒ ☒ ☒

Voting Action Officers

Department of State: Office of Overseas Citizens Services

Chief VAO: Mr. Jack Markey, **tel:** (202) 736-4937, **fax:** (202) 647-6201, **Email:** markeyjd@state.gov
Deputy VAO: Ms. Linda Hoover, **tel:** (202) 647-5435, **fax:** (202) 647-6201, **Email:** hooverlr@state.gov

Service Voting Action Officers

U.S. Dept. of the Army: Mr. James Davis **tel:** (703) 325-4530 **DSN:** 221-4530; **fax:** (703) 325-4532
DSN fax: 221-4532; **Email:** davisj@hoffman.army.mil,
http: <http://www.vote.army.mil> or **https:** <https://www.vote.army.mil>

U.S. Dept. of the Navy: LT Bill Danzi **tel:** 1-866-U-ASK-NPC (827-5672); **DSN:** 882-4606, **fax:** (901) 874-2054,
DSN fax: 882-2054; **Email:** MILL_navyvote@navy.mil, **http:** <http://www.mwr.navy.mil/nvap/index.html>

U.S. Dept. of the Air Force: Lt. Col. Lee Shick **tel:** (210) 565-2338 (Mr. John Lowrance), **toll free:** 1-866-229-7074 (select option 4, then 6 from menu), **DSN:** 665-4369; **fax:** (210) 565-2543, **DSN fax:** 665-2543;
Email: afpc/dpsfvotingpgmdlist@randolph.af.mil; **http:** <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/votefund/>

U.S. Marine Corps: GySgt Kenneth B. Warford **tel:** (703) 784-9511, **DSN:** 278-9511; **fax:** (703) 784-9827,
DSN fax: 278-9827; **Email:** kenneth.warford@usmc.mil
https: https://lnweb1.manpower.usmc.mil/manpower/mi/mra_ofct.nsf/mrp/Voting+Home

U.S. Coast Guard: YNCS Lori McNaught **tel:** (202)-267-1636, **fax:** (202) 267-4823;
Email: LMcNaught@comdt.uscg.mil, **http:** http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-w/g-wp/g-wpm/g-wpm-1/VotingAssistance/Voting_Assistance.htm

All of the above can also be reached through the DoD Voting Information Center and the FVAP Website.

Federal Voting Assistance Program

Department of Defense
1155 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC
20301-1155

PHONE:
(703) 588-1584
DSN 425-1584

FAX
(703) 696-1352
DSN 426-1352

VOTING INFORMATION
CENTER (VIC):
(703) 588-1343
DSN 425-1343

TOLL FREE (VIC and FVAP
staff member):
1-800-438-VOTE (8683)

Visit our website for
international toll-free phone
and fax numbers.

EMAIL:
vote@fvap.ncr.gov

Comments or suggestions on
this newsletter are welcome.

Website:
www.fvap.gov

Vote!

Best Practices – Voting Continuity Folder

(continued from front page)

What Are Voting Best Practices?

Best Practices are processes, procedures and novel ideas that have produced excellent results within an organization and have contributed significantly to the mission of the Federal Voting Assistance Program.

As a VAO, the FVAP mission is your mission as well. Your mission has three distinct goals. These are to:

- inform and educate U.S. citizens of their right to vote;
- foster voting participation; and
- protect the integrity of, and simultaneously enhance, the electoral process.

FVAP requests that organizations share their best practices and novel ideas by sending them up the chain of command or to their Service Voting Action Officer (contact information on page 3).

See Chapter Two of the *2004-05 Voting Assistance Guide* on page 17 for procedures on how to submit best practices to FVAP. Also available online at: www.fvap.gov. Select "Publications and Forms".

What Are Some Best Practices Related to Voting Continuity Folders?

After each Federal election year, Services submit an after action report on best practices. Two good ideas submitted recently are as follows:

Air Force Best Practice: The IVAO issued a standard continuity book to each VAO upon initial training.

Air Force Best Practice: The IVAO developed and maintained an electronic continuity binder on a base server for all group level voting counselors to access.

Both procedures increased efficiency and productivity for the voting program. Hours were saved in reproducing similar information. Standard information was developed for VAO use. For further information on these best practices contact the Air Force Voting Action Officer.

If you believe you have a similar or other best practice from your voting assistance program, let us know. Email your Service Voting Action Officer (contact information on page 3) and/or the FVAP at vote@fvap.ncr.gov. Enter "Best Practice" in Subject line. ☑

Moving? Send an FPCA to notify your local election official. Also, send us an email so that you and your replacement can continue receiving this *newsletter*.

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